

What I remember from my days in the CCC Camps, by Albert R. Matson (formerly from the Story City/ Randall, Iowa area.)

I was inducted in the CCC Camp at Clarion, Iowa.

We were given our clothing—brown army clothes. Pants had bell-bottom legs, army shirts, heavy army coats that went well below the knees, our underwear and a army cap that was shaped like a tent called a g-i, and very good leather shoes.

We were awakened at 6 am – dressed and made our beds before breakfast. A lieutenant would come around checking each bed and hitting the bed with a cane. I assume this procedure was to make sure there were no wrinkles that would form, if so, I also assume the person the bed belonged to would have to remake their bed or get a demerit. We then gathered outdoors around the flag pole to pay alligence to our country and the U.S. flag, then we would all rush into the mess hall for breakfast. We were served pancakes, sausage, coffee, and milk – we had all we could eat. Some of the boys were chosen to stay for KP duty. We did have a bugle call for breakfast.

We climbed into canvas-covered trucks with benches on each side. We were taken about five miles across farmland to a creek where trees had grown up (some were of a good size) and we were to cut the trees down, cut them into lengths and burn the wood.

Many people, at that time, were using wood to heat their homes and they could have used the wood, but we were told to burn the wood.

Sandwiches were brought out for lunch. About 4:30 pm we were taken back to the camp, and later served a big supper.

I received \$30 per month.

Then orders were given that about one-fourth of our camp group would be transferred to Crisco, Iowa to work in a rock quarry breaking large rocks into smaller ones. We were put on a train to make the trip.

Each CCC Camp had a library where we could pick books we wanted to read.

Each Camp had a Captain and other officers.

The work was hard, but it helped to put muscles on the boys.

After about a year I was given an honorable discharge because my brother needed me to help him on his farm.

The following year I was asked to be a leader of another program for boys (teens) called the NYA (National Youth Association). The NYA was formed to help give work, plus a small salary to youth who qualified and wanted to work.

I lived in the southeast corner of Hamilton County. The town was Randall and I had seven boys from the Randall/ Story City area to sign up.

The work consisted of building a dam on the Skunk River, not much material was furnished. Big rocks plus chunks of wood from cut down trees were used to build the dam. This dam was located close to a deep fishing hole and the dam made it even deeper. A few years later a flood broke the dam. The purpose for the dam was to have better fishing.

I was instructed to keep the time the boys worked and sent the report into headquarters in Webster City to a Mr. Wilkenson.

In the winter months I was given corn for the boys to distribute to feed the pheasants.

The National Youth Association did not work too well and so was discontinued after a year. The Iowa government did not seem to have the finances to continue the program.